



## Leon County Teen Court Agreement to Participate

Teen Court is a prevention/ diversion program. All participants are required to respect the integrity and dignity of the program and the proceedings. Each participant must take an Oath of Confidentiality. Defendants are required to tell the truth under oath. **In order to participate in Teen Court, the client must take responsibility for their involvement in the crime and accept the charge(s) against them.**

The purposes of Leon County's Teen Court are:

1. To reduce the caseload of the Juvenile Court System
2. To provide defendants with the opportunity to explain their involvement for the offense which they were cited.
3. To give defendants the opportunity to be sentenced by their peers.
4. To give all teen participants a better understanding of the judicial system.
5. To affect a high degree of victim restitution and community compensation.
6. To serve as an educational program where teens can reflect on their decision-making and give back to the community by serving jury duty for other teens that become involved with the legal system.

Teen Court involves appearing in a real courtroom before a qualified adult judge. Specially trained teenagers fill the roles and responsibilities of prosecuting/defense attorneys, bailiffs, and jurors.

The jury is made up of volunteers from local middle schools and high schools, along with former defendants who are sanctioned to return and serve on the jury. After considering arguments and evidence presented by the teen attorneys, the jury will consider the important issues from both the prosecution and the defense and come to an agreement with regards to an appropriate sentence. The sentence will include a specified number of community service hours, returning to serve on the Teen Court jury and to participate in the Rap Group counseling sessions. Other sanctions may be imposed with respect to the individual offender and could include educational classes or packets such as Anger Management, Theft Awareness and Chemical Education.

If you complete all Teen Court requirements within the deadline date, the original legal charge(s) against you will be dismissed. This is a most important aspect of the Teen Court process because it means you will not have a record of prosecution or conviction that could follow you the remainder of your life.

If you do not complete all sanctions set forth by the Teen Court Jury and requirements of the Program, your case will be returned to the referring agency (State Attorney or Civil Citation) for further legal action.

**As a defendant, you also need to know and understand that if additional charges are brought against you for illegal actions (re-arrest), which occur between the time you sign this agreement to participate in the Teen Court Program, and before the completion of the conditions of the sentence, you will be terminated from the Teen Court Program.**

Teen Court can also be considered as your probationary period. All actions while at Teen Court, in school or at home must reflect lawful decisions. Attendance at school and maintaining good behavior is required. Further, you must be responsible and respectful in your home.

Teens and adults must conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner at all times while at the courthouse annex and must comply with all requests made by Teen Court staff, officers, and Leon County Sheriff's Deputies. When returning to serve jury duty, Teen Court clients must arrive no later than 5:30 p.m. for Rap Session and must be picked up no later than 8:00 p.m. from jury duty. **PARENTS, PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT FAILURE TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD BY 8:00 PM MAY RESULT IN YOUR CHILD BEING TAKEN TO Capital City Youth Services.**

While you are in the Teen Court program, you agree that you are not to leave the Court House Annex property until your ride has arrived. Additionally, you agree that you are not permitted to smoke on the property even if you are 18 years of age or older. Lastly, you agree that you are fully aware that any violation of the Teen Court dress code or any of the above mentioned guidelines will result in loss of credit for attending Teen Court or failure from the Teen Court program.

It is further understood and agreed, that as a condition of your participation in the Teen Court Program, you and your parent(s) agree to hold harmless the following entities: The Teen Court Program and its employees, the Second Judicial Circuit Court, and designated community service work sites and their employees from any all actions or causes of any claims whatsoever, which may arise out of participation in any activities of the Teen Court Program, including any coming or going.

With your signature, you acknowledge that you have read, or that someone has read and explained to you, the contents of the Agreement to Participate in Teen Court. You fully understand your obligation to the Teen Court sentence and that you will abide by its conditions. You also understand that failure to comply with the Teen Court sanctions will result in your case file being returned as "unsuccessful" and further legal action may be taken by the referring agency.

With your signature below, you also acknowledge that under Florida law, you have a right to have your case disposed of within 90 days of arrest. By signing this agreement, you hereby waive this right. You further understand that such a waiver shall be in effect for the time you are in a non-judicial program, or for 90 days after your termination from a non-judicial program for unsatisfactory performance.

**Your deadline for completion of all Teen Court Jury sanctions and Program requirements is:**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Defendant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Teen Court Staff

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date